



## WEBTOON'S POTENTIALS TO ENHANCE EFL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY

Elza Aqilla Novanti<sup>1</sup>, Suprayogi Suprayogi<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia<sup>1,2</sup>

elzaaqillaedu@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>

suprayogi@teknokrat.ac.id<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

The aims of this paper to show the use of Webtoon for EFL students to get more vocabulary either by the dialogue or even just the picture itself because it also can increase the level of curiosity and let them create new words. Webtoon has been known as one of the e-comic applications that are loved by young generations because it is simple yet fun. The use of outstanding visual and daily basis dialogues surely will help students to understand the meaning of the whole scene. The method of the research used qualitative descriptive. The technique of collecting data and the data are questionnaire from EFL Learners that also use webtoon on their daily activity as well as English teachers who use webtoon in their class. Overall EFL learners who are also webtoon users found that the application helps them to create new words by seeing the visualization along with the dialogue.

**Keywords:** EFL, Vocabulary, Webtoon

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## INTRODUCTION

Technology brings people to see how the world develops from year to year. So many things that seem impossible but slowly become possible. In today's era, there are many innovations created to facilitate human life, not only for daily needs but also for other things. Humans often feel attracted to something that we can see directly with the eyes, because the brain is faster to receive stimuli from the eyes or it can be said that the eye is the sense of sight that dominates the other senses. Seeing this fact, many people are competing to make something creative to attract people visually, not only by applying technology in it, but also involving English as part of the innovation they make.

English is one of the many languages most widely used by many countries in the world therefore people need to study it as a medium of communication among nations and as a bridge of information from all over the world. In the context of Indonesia, English is a foreign language, unlike in Malaysia as a second language or Australia as a first language. Due to this position, the government stipulates that English needs to be mastered and taught in education units. For this reason, English has become a compulsory subject for all levels of education from elementary school to university level. Because most Indonesians are English as Foreign Language Learners, learning English is still limited to be learnt in schools. This makes English skills not entirely sufficient for some students. Therefore, not a few students who need to take additional courses outside school or university to improve the English language skills of their (Haryanto, 2016).

Furthermore, current English students are Generation Z, the generation who always carries their gadget or smartphone and is connected to the internet at school, home, and everywhere (McCoog, 2008). Students have invented technology that provides a constant connection to friends and family. Cell phones, text and instant messaging, blogs, and social networks are becoming a common part of their daily lives. Integration of technology in language teaching also have become concerned of several researchers, such as Al Falaq et al (2021) on the use of Wattpad in literature class, Pranoto & Suprayogi (2020) on the use of 9Gag application in daily conversation class, Suprayogi & Pranoto (2020) on the use of zoom for virtual exhibition, Aminatun & Oktaviani (2019) on the use of Memrise in Business English class, Oktaviani & Mandasari (2020) on the use of Powtoon for cultural presentation, Wahyudin, et al (2020) on the use of Tondoo Comic in teaching English, and many more. It is to address the problem that teaching Gen Z learners is more difficult than other generation groups, including preparing teaching English material for them. Therefore, many teachers tend to use some applications to teach English among Generation Z becomes interesting, fun, and effective (Oktaviani & Sari, 2020).

Webtoon is an application that is currently being favored by the public. Webtoon is considered attractive because of its colorful design, attractive animation is also simple. Webtoon literally means "website", meaning webtoons are comics published over the web and optimized for computer or smartphone screens. The webtoon is here in Korea, and this discovery is extraordinary. According to Putri (2018), Webtoon have distinctive features that can not be ditemukandi webcomics countries ity else her. This app naturally attracts the younger generation especially the Z generation as each presents a variety of genres along with amazing image illustrations. However, webtoons and print comics have differences in general, Webtoons are places where new and old media come together to produce different effects, stories, genres and become a platform for disseminating works. There is also the insertion of background music to strengthen the atmosphere and emotion of a story.

Webtoon has several languages used for comics, one of which is English. The presence of a Webtoon in English is an opportunity for students of English as a foreign language to improve their English skills, one of which is the vocabulary aspect. Research on Webtoon as an English learning medium has been carried out by Putri (2018) entitled "The Use of Webtoon and KWL (Know-Want-Learn) Strategy to Improve Students' Reading Fluency" explaining that the use of webtoons helps to improve reading skills. The study remains unclear whether reading can also increase students' vocabulary indirectly. Wulandari (2019) in a study entitled "The Effectiveness of Webtoon for EFL Student in Mastering Vocabulary" explains that Webtoons can help improve language skills by adding vocabulary but does not explain how. Supitri (2019) investigated how webtoons can increase Indonesian high school students' English vocabulary. However, research that combines literature studies and surveys for a wider segment of students is still very rare. For this reason, this research focuses on the use of technology which has increased during the COVID-19 period, which has had a major impact on the process of learning English vocabulary.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to analyze how Webtoon has the potential to be used as a source of vocabulary learning. Therefore, the research method used is descriptive qualitative research method. The descriptive research method is prioritizing analysis and descriptive data from the people or actors being observed (Suprayogi, 2020). The subjects of this research were 48 mixed high school students and college students from Bandar Lampung, Lampung Province. Subjects were selected by random sampling technique or random selection. However, the 48 students must be active users of the webtoon for the last 6 months and are studying English at their education level. Data were collected through questionnaires online using *Google form*. The questions developed in accordance with the purpose of research, then passes through whatsapp application, through group and whatsapp story. The questionnaire consists of 5 questions with answer choices and 2 descriptive questions, ranging from an overview of genre preferences, duration of use to the use of webtoons in adding English vocabulary to the subjects of this study. The answers to these questions were then analyzed for each item.

To explore the discussion on optimizing the use of webtoons to learn English, interviews were conducted with 5 English teachers at the university level and the criteria for interviewed lecturers was lecturer who's speaking skills and have been using intensive technology in learning. Interview questions were asked in a semi-structured manner. Interviews were recorded using a smartphone for data analysis purposes. The data were analyzed qualitatively and linked to the results of the previous questionnaire.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To find out how Webtoon has the potential to increase English vocabulary, it is first necessary to know the characteristics of the webtoon users themselves, especially those who use them as learning media. After conducting a survey to 48 students and college students, the following data were obtained:

Table 1. Response to Choice Questions

No	Question	Response	Response
1	In a day, how much time do you spend reading Webtoons?	43.8% less than an hour	56.2% more than one hour
2	Are you a typical reader of all episodes in 1 story Webtoon	75% readers of all episodes	25% of readers of incomplete episodes
3	How often do you find difficulty to understand webtoon's story?	58.3 % often	41.7 % rarely
4	Does the visualization in Webtoon comics help you understand unfamiliar dialogue or words ?	91, 7 % helped	8, 3 % doesn't help

From the results of the distributed questionnaires, it can be seen that most of the webtoon users who are English learners from Generation Z are readers who feel comfortable reading for a long time. It is seen that 56.2% of readers spend more than one hour. This result correlates with the second question about reader type. There are 75% of readers who tend to spend an episode of the story until the end, while 25% only read part of the story. As learners of English as a foreign language, some of the respondents to the questionnaire often had difficulty understanding stories in English, while some of the other respondents had no difficulty. These results are quite balanced, i.e 58.3 % and 41.7%. Almost all webtoon users as respondents to this research believe that visualization of webtoon comics understands the meaning of dialogue or words that they consider familiar.

The results of the descriptive questions about the reasons respondents chose Webtoon became an interesting discussion. This is because respondents have varied responses regarding the accessibility and popularity of Webtoon.

Table 2. Response Question Description 1

Respondent	Answer
5	<i>"The pictures on the webtoon look very original and I'm a visual person, so it's like a real story."</i>
9	<i>"Because it's free and it's not like stealing anywhere else . If there are other applications that are paid ."</i>
17	<i>"The application is very easy to use, not complicated when you want to read."</i>
23	<i>"There are various genres, so you can explore. Don't be bored."</i>
39	<i>"The stories are good, some of them were made into movies."</i>

The results of the questionnaire on the description questions explain that Webtoon helps increase English vocabulary because of its visualization. It is in line with Simamora and Oktaviani (2020) that stated students can improve their vocabulary by looking at picture, checking the spelling, and remembering the pronunciation. The following is an example of respondents' answers to this question item.

Table 3. Response to Questions Description 2

Respondent	Answer
3	<i>"I think there's a lot of new vocabulary in Webtoon, I don't know what it means. But the visualizations/images in the webtoon help me understand the story well"</i>
7	<i>"The English webtoon was able to make me understand the words better by looking at the visualization of the story"</i>
13	<i>"There are so many new words that appear in every dialogue. I'm still new to English so with this picture I know what it means"</i>
41	<i>"Especially in the fantasy genre, there is a lot of terminology that we don't know, because not all of it is everyday vocabulary."</i>

The results of this research show that there are 3 potentials for Webtoon in improving English vocabulary. The questionnaire consists of choice questions and description questions to help formulate the potential of the Webtoon to increase English vocabulary for groups of learners of English as a foreign language.

First, Webtoon is Generation Z friendly. Webtoon is practical where it can be downloaded in the *play* store; therefore, it can be opened via both smartphone and laptop. By using advanced features that make the readers enjoy the reading process, Webtoon is also supported by new types of stories consisting the conflicts of today's youth. Second, webtoon offers interesting learning activities. Students feel enjoyed because they can do story reading during free time or even leisure time like doing their hobbies. Webtoon provides a fun learning experience and tend to be effortless because Generation Z generally likes activities that are directly related to application, social media, and the Internet (Haron, 2015; Oktaviani and Desiarti, 2017). Third, Webtoon provides new vocabularies and visualization. This is in line with the essay responses from research respondents about how webtoons help users in adding new vocabulary in English. According to (Erzad, 2018) students tend to use applications such as *YouTube and Instagram* as learning media because the visualizations offered are interesting and easy to understand.

Talking about genres, all kinds of genres that are of interest to readers will help them improve their English skills because each genre has its own vocabulary or language. New genre for the students will add their insights as well. Not only in vocabulary, readers can also find the style of language used or characterize the language of that genre. In addition, the readers usually get a lot of slang vocabulary through Webtoon they read, so that they not only speak formally or speak English too Indonesia, but readers can also learn how English is used by the natives.

The more variety of genres in Webtoon, the more insights readers will get. Consequently, it will also help them improve their English. Each genre has different story characters with different characteristics. In the context of English literature students, reading Webtoon would be seen as another form of entertainment. Not

only as entertainment, but also to analyze how the story line is, how sociological in the story is, what problems are raised from the story, besides that another part that is no less interesting is how psychoanalytical perspective of the characters. This strengthens the reason why webtoons can be a learning media for students.

Based on the results of interviews with respondents who teach Webtoon as a medium, Webtoon has the potential to improve English vocabulary. The five respondents believe that students' vocabulary can increase along with the number of stories students read, and the vocabulary will still be remembered if used in everyday language contexts and practiced. There are at least 3 recommendations on how to optimize Webtoon in terms of improving English vocabulary.

The first is the "Guess – Translate – Save" Technique. Based on (Bertamini and Makin, 2018), the human brain responds faster when dealing with visualizations. Of course, this can be the main reason. This technique is one way of optimizing the use of Webtoon in the process of getting English vocabulary, with good visualization it allows users to easily understand the meaning of the image that contains the dialogue in it and then look up the meaning of the word in the dictionary. This activity will be useful in the process of absorbing a new language, especially English.

The second is the "Scene Description Technique". Electronic comics offer many conveniences for their users, which can be accessed at any time and free of charge. This of course can be used as a means of learning foreign language vocabulary in a fun way (Zalmansyah, 2013), with the ease of access that students get, students can learn vocabulary from what happened in the comic involving players and conflicts in it while increasing cognitive function in the function of learning media (Arsyad, 2011).

The third is the "Technique of Creating Dialogs from Images". Visualization is a strong supporting factor in terms of increasing understanding. There are several types of visuals that can teach vocabulary to students, namely pictures, posters, photos, illustrations, icons, symbols, sketches, drawings, presentations, and mind mapping. These things can be a motivation for students, to make it easier to memorize English vocabulary. A variety of teaching techniques need to be introduced to maintain students' interest in the teaching and learning process of vocabulary. Studies conducted by Wijayanti (2018) shows that the use of plain images without dialogue helps students to translate the idea of an abstract to be more realistic and also useful for to make students more active in class and improve the performance of vocabulary.

## CONCLUSION

Many people create something creative and innovative but economical to attract people with extraordinary visuals or significant young generation because of the leading role. For this generation, it does not only involve technology but also involves English as the main language used in most of the world. big latest innovation. English is one of the most widely used language used by Bome countries in the world where people are forced to learn it because the key communication and getting information from around the world, especially in Indonesia. This supports the use of the Webtoon application for Generation Z to learn foreign languages in a fun way, supported by the internet and also the ease of accessing Webtoon, which is one of the platforms that has succeeded in becoming a means of learning English vocabulary in today's era.

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## **BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS**

Elza Aqilla Novanti is an active student of Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia, currently studying on her 7th Semester. She is active on Students Exective Boards of UTI and also being a part of FSIP Lecturer Assistant.

Suprayogi, S.S., M. Hum. is a lecturer in English Literature Study Program of Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia. His interest is in English Language and Literature teaching for Indonesian EFL in tertiary education. He also focuses on Discourse Analysis and Language Variation Study.